
ABOUT HEN

- The mission of Denver Public Schools Homeless Education Network is to assist DPS students experiencing homelessness through direct support and advocacy. The primary objective is to remove educational barriers to help ensure students engage successfully in school and cultivate their unique strengths and talents.
- HEN is a resource for DPS schools to provide guidance and the connection to Denver-area support services for families experiencing homelessness.
- HEN ensures district compliance of the McKinney-Vento Act Title IX of ESSA

HEN focuses support on school readiness and student success including:

- School enrollment and advocacy
- Backpacks/school supplies
- School meal assistance
- Clothing, uniform assistance and school fee assistance
- Basic-need supplies
- Connecting to community resources
- School transportation
- Senior Support Program: Graduation fee assistance including payment of cap and gown
- McKinney-Vento Verification for FAFSA Purposes

WHO ARE HOMELESS AND UNACCOMPANIED YOUTH?

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act defines homeless youth as students whose living situation is not fixed, regular, and adequate. Unaccompanied youth are students fitting the definition of homelessness and not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.

Examples include students who are:

- Sharing the housing of others due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or similar reason;
- Living in motels, hotels;
- Living in RVs, inadequate trailer parks, or camping grounds due to lack of adequate alternative accommodations;
- Living in emergency shelters or transitional housing programs;
- Abandoned in hospitals;
- Living in a public or private place not designed for humans to live;
- Living in cars, parks, abandoned buildings, bus or train stations, etc.;
- Living in any of these situations and fleeing an abusive situation, even if the parent would provide support and a place to live;
- Migratory children living in the aforementioned circumstances;
- Unaccompanied youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.
The following educational accommodations or supports should be for homeless and unaccompanied students:

- Immediate enrollment without proof of residency, immunizations, school records, or other documents;
- Transportation to the school of origin;
- Enrollment in free lunch program and other school resources;
- Identify and remove barriers that prevent youth from receiving appropriate credit for full or partial coursework satisfactorily completed while attending a prior school, including barriers due to fees, fines, or absences.
- Assistance from counselors to advise such youths, prepare for, and improve readiness for college.
- Privacy protections under FERPA about a McKinney-Vento student’s living situation.
- Providing school stability. School stability applies when students lose housing during the year or during the summer. Research demonstrates that keeping the student in the school of origin is in the student’s best interest. School of origin is the school attended when permanently housed or school in which last enrolled. Once determined as in a homeless situation, the student shall be permitted to:
  - Continue in the school of origin for the duration of homelessness, and until the end of the academic year in which the student becomes permanently housed; or
  - Enroll in any public school that is within the attendance area where the student is residing.

What can schools do to make sure unaccompanied youth can enroll and receive services?

Call your area DPS McKinney-Vento Homeless Liaison for assistance in determining eligibility.

Strategies:
1. Let youth enroll themselves in school
2. Let adult caregivers who are not legal guardians enroll youth (e.g. youth shelter staff or outreach worker)
3. Let school liaisons complete enrollment forms or request liaisons provide a McKinney-Vento verification letter.

Financial Aid Application Assistance for Homeless Unaccompanied Youth:

The College Cost Reduction and Access Act (CCRAA) of 2007 made significant changes to the FAFSA that makes it easier for unaccompanied homeless youth to obtain the financial support. This Act allows unaccompanied homeless youth to qualify as independent students for purposes of federal financial aid because they do not need to report their parents’ information, or have their parents sign the FAFSA.

Explanation for Homeless and Unaccompanied versus Unaccompanied

1. A Homeless Liaison must verify homeless status first then unaccompanied status:
   a) Youth must be staying in one of the McKinney-Vento homeless categories after July 1 of their graduation school year and not be in the physical presence of a parent or legal guardian
   b) They cannot be without guardian but live stably with another person like a relative.

If student is unaccompanied the student can receive a McKinney-Vento Verification letter for FAFSA Purposes.
Federal Programs

Denver Public Schools McKinney-Vento Education Liaison Information:
Intake Line: 720.423.1980
HEN Fax: 720.545.0425

- Far Northeast DPS Region McKinney-Vento Homeless Liaison- 720.423.1983 Briana West
- Southwest/Southeast DPS Region McKinney-Vento Homeless Liaison 720.423.1986 Rebecca Romero
- Northwest DPS Region McKinney-Vento Homeless Liaison 720.423.1984 Calvin Knutzen (Hablo Español)
- High Schools, District Wide McKinney-Vento Liaison 720.423.1985 Whitney Whitaker
- Program Manager Anna Theisen 720.423.1982

For more information on the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Assistance Act and HEN services contact the homeless liaison for your school or visit http://childservices.dpsk12.org

Higher Ed Resources and Links:
Colorado Department of Education link: http://www.cde.state.co.us/dropoutprevention/homeless

Toll-free helpline: (855)-446-2673 highered@naehcy.org or text "NAEHCY" to 335577
The NAEHCY Higher Education Helpline provides assistance with issues related to students experiencing homelessness accessing higher education. www.naehcy.org

McKinney-Vento Scholarship Opportunity:
Homeless students may want to consider applying for the LaTendre Scholarship through NAEHCY as well as scholarships through College in Colorado: https://secure.collegeincolorado.org/Financial_Aid_Planning/Scholarships/_default.aspx

Single Point of Contact: for Unaccompanied students in CO colleges (SPOC's)
There is a list of these contacts put together each year. Please note these do sometimes change. We can get students connected with these college appointment people that help navigate the college process for unaccompanied students. Can be found here: http://www.cde.state.co.us/dropoutprevention/homeless_hespocs (click on list of college contacts link)

Posters for Unaccompanied Homeless youth and higher education:
http://center.serve.org/nche/downloads/he_poster.pdf

Making Unaccompanied Youth FAFSA determination tool:

Dependency Status Excerpt from FAFSA
college-bound homeless students, including fee waivers for Advanced Placement exams, college entrance exams, and college application fees.
Avoiding FAFSA Errors
http://www.naehcy.org/sites/default/files/dl/fafsa-errors.pdf

Denver Public Schools | Homeless Education Network 1617 S. Acoma St. Denver, CO 80223 |
Emergency Shelter and Housing Resources for Youth:

**Urban Peak:** [http://www.urbanpeak.org/](http://www.urbanpeak.org/)

Urban Peak Denver Shelter - youth ages 14-24  
Location: 1630 South Acoma Denver, CO 80223  
Phone: 303-974-2908- (Intake line) Fax: 303-777-9438  
Urban Peak Denver Outreach - 303-292-0641 Urban Peak Denver Outreach Cell Phone - 720-364-2644  

Pre-screening questions we ask when youth call to inquire about shelter availability:

1. Do you have proof of age, i.e. ID, birth certificate? (This should not be a barrier for folks if they do not have those things because they can sign ROIs for us to connect with a parent, school, or other organization that can confirm age.)
2. Do you have any involvement with Dept. of Youth Services?  
3. Are you on probation or parole? (We would need them to sign an ROI for their probation/parole officer in order to stay)  
4. Do you have an open case with social services?  
5. Do you have any substance use or mental health concerns we should be aware of?

**Urban Peak Housing Coordinator:** 720.974.2907  
Urban Peak develops, owns, and manages housing to assist youth transition from homelessness to responsible, independent living. Urban Peak identifies the resources and partnerships necessary to provide housing, and adds to the pool of affordable housing options for at-risk and homeless youth. Each program provides wrap around supportive services, including case management and health care.

**Volunteers of America Bannock Youth Center:**  
Location: 455 Bannock Denver, CO 80204 720.217.3884  
[https://www.voacolorado.org/gethelp-denvermetro-ryes-youth](https://www.voacolorado.org/gethelp-denvermetro-ryes-youth)

**Youth and Young Families**

The Youth and Young Families program provides case management and permanent housing support for homeless youth and their families. Single males, single male parents, LGBTQ welcome.

**Eligibility**

- Between 16-24 years of age
- Income
- Vital Documents for all household members
- Homeless Verification
- Referral from local shelters and direct service providers

Potential applicants should contact the Youth Services Coordinator at 720-217-3884.
Mile High United Way--Bridging the Gap: 303 433-8383

BTG offers eligible young people 36 months of housing assistance through the Family Unification Program voucher (FUP).

Housing program eligibility:
The Family Unification Program housing choice voucher (FUP voucher) provides a 36-month housing voucher to eligible youth who meet the following criteria:

- Youth must be between the ages of 18 through 24.
- Youth must have been in a foster care/child welfare placement for at least one night on or after their 16th birthday.
- Youth must pass a criminal background check.
- Youth must currently lack adequate housing.
  (Lack of adequate housing includes living in substandard or dilapidated housing, being homeless, living in transitional housing, displaced by domestic violence, living in an overcrowded unit, in imminent danger of losing housing, or living in housing not accessible due to the nature of a disability.)
- Youth must have an active Case Management or Service Plan developed with the referring partner agency.

Attention Homes: 303.447.1207
Attention Homes provides youth and young adult’s ages 12 to 21 with an opportunity to change their lives. We offer shelter, community-based living and teaching of life skills necessary for an independent future. We have two programs for youth in crisis: Runaway and Homeless Youth (RHY) and Adolescent Residential Care (RES).

Headquarters: 1443 Spruce Street | Boulder, CO 80302
The Source Shelter: 3080 Broadway | Boulder, CO 80302
Phone: 303.447.1206 (Main Office)
303.447.1207 (The Source Shelter)
Email: contactah@attentionhomes.org

Day Shelters and Advocacy for Youth:
- Dry Bones Denver: https://drybonesdenver.org/denvers-homeless-youth-young-adults/
- Stand Up for Kids: http://www.standupforkids.org/denver

Other Emergency Resources:
Alternatives to Family Violence: (303) 657-4754
Covenant House (888) 545-2988
Denver Center for Crime Victims: (303) 894-8000
Hope line Suicide Hotline: 1-800-273-8255
Servicios de la Raza: 303-458-5851
Mile High United Way Hotline - Dial 211
National Runaway Switchboard 1-800-RUNAWAY
Colorado Crisis Services 1-844-493-8255
Benefits and Document Obtainment:
Unaccompanied Youth can apply for Medicaid and SNAP Nutrition benefits on their own:
Apply Online at: PEAK Colorado: [https://coloradopeak.secure.force.com/](https://coloradopeak.secure.force.com/)
or
For Medicaid – Denver Public Schools School Medicaid Department:
[outreach@dpsk12.org](mailto:outreach@dpsk12.org)
Phone: 720.423.3661

USDA Free Breakfast/Lunch Program Eligibility: McKinney-Vento Eligible students are categorically eligible for Free Lunch Services and do not need to complete the Free Lunch Application. Please contact your school’s McKinney-Vento Homeless Liaison for direct qualification.

For SNAP Food Benefit Application Link: [http://www.denvergov.org/humanservices](http://www.denvergov.org/humanservices)
Any office, Monday - Friday, 8:00a.m. - 4:30p.m., and pick up an application:
- Castro Building, 1200 Federal Blvd, Denver, CO 80204
- East Office, 3815 Steele St., Denver, CO 80205
- Montbello Satellite Office, 4685 Peoria St., Denver, CO 80239
Mail or Fax: To send an application to you by mail or fax – call at 720-944-3666
Applicants must schedule an interview.

Hunger Free Hotline
855.855.4626
[http://www.hungerfreecolorado.org/](http://www.hungerfreecolorado.org/)
The Hunger Free Hotline is a multilingual toll-free number that connects Coloradans to needed food. It is a free “one-stop” resource that offers geographically-based referrals to both public and private food assistance programs throughout the state. Hunger Free screens for all federal nutrition assistance programs, keeps all information confidential and is open to all individuals, regardless of legal status. (can also help sign up for SNAP benefits)

Denver Health School Based Health Clinics: [https://www.denverhealth.org/services/school-based-health-centers](https://www.denverhealth.org/services/school-based-health-centers)
Unaccompanied Youth enrolled in Denver Public Schools can also access medical and mental health services at the Denver School-Based Health Centers located at the following DPS campuses:

- Bruce Randolph
- Evie Dennis Campus
- John F. Kennedy
- Kepner
- Kunsmiller Creative Arts Academy
- Lake International School
- Abraham Lincoln HS
- Manual HS
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Early College
- Montbello HS
- North HS
- Place Bridge Academy
- Rachel B. Noel
- South HS
- West HS
Help Obtaining Documents and IDs:

- Colorado ID Project: 303-837-1321
- Colorado Legal Services- (303) 837-1313
- Metro Caring- 303 860-7200

Employment, GED and Job Training Resources:

- Mi Casa Resource Center: [http://www.micasaresourcecenter.org/youth-family-development](http://www.micasaresourcecenter.org/youth-family-development)
- Mile High Youth Corps: 1801 Federal Blvd Denver, CO 80204 Phone: 303.433.1206, option 2 Fax: 303.433.5997 Hours: Monday-Friday: 8:00 a.m. to 4:30p.m [http://www.milehighyouthcorps.org/](http://www.milehighyouthcorps.org/)
- Job Corps: [https://www.jobcorps.gov/](https://www.jobcorps.gov/)

[Homeless Education Network](https://childservices.dpsk12.org)